

IN THE CLAIMS

1. (Currently Amended) A method for supporting the development of inventions by a plurality of inventors, said inventors using a plurality of computing devices connected in a network, the method comprising the steps of:

creating by a first computing device a subscriber list, said subscriber list comprising subscriber records, each of said subscriber records having at least a subscriber name, subscriber contact information, and subscriber qualifications;

storing said subscriber list in a database;

receiving by the first computing device a proposal for an invention from an initial inventor, said proposal including desired co-inventor qualifications;

determining by the first computing device a confidentiality level for the proposal for invention;

~~creating by the first computing device~~ a set of desired co-inventor qualifications;

storing the set of desired co-inventor qualifications in a database;

creating by the first computing device a pool of co-inventors by searching for subscriber records in the subscriber list with subscriber qualifications matching the desired co-inventor qualifications, wherein said co-inventors in said created pool develop the invention described in the proposal for invention; ~~and~~

contacting by the first computing device subscribers in the pool of co-inventors to inform said subscribers of the proposal for invention; and

providing by the first computing device a forum for the pool of co-inventors and the initial inventor to communicate and to further develop the proposal for invention, wherein information is provided in the forum according to a level of confidentiality.

2-3. (Cancelled)

4. (Previously Presented) The method as recited in claim 1, wherein the proposal for invention is transmitted over the network, wherein at least one of said plurality of computing devices is used by the initial inventor and at least one of said plurality of computing devices is

used for receiving the proposal for invention.

5. (Previously Presented) The method as recited in claim 1, wherein the step of creating a pool of co-inventors is performed by an Invention Proposal Server.

6. (Currently Amended) The method as recited in claim 1 ~~2~~, wherein the step of contacting subscribers is performed over the network, each of said plurality of computing devices being accessible by one or more subscribers in the pool of co-inventors.

7. (Currently Amended) The method as recited in claim 1 ~~2~~, wherein the step of providing a forum is performed over the network by an Invention Proposal Forum Server, each of said plurality of computing devices being accessible by one or more subscribers in the pool of co-inventors.

8. (Previously Presented) The method as recited in claim 7, wherein the step of providing a forum further comprises a step of:

providing at least one web page as the forum of the initial inventor and the pool of co-inventors, wherein the at least one web page is a file and the Invention Proposal Forum Server acts as a web server for said at least one web page.

9. (Currently Amended) The method as recited in claim 1, wherein the step of creating a subscriber list further comprises the steps ~~comprising a step~~ of:

contacting, by an individual using a computing device, a Subscriber Database;
creating a subscriber record for the individual on the Subscriber Database;
inputting, by the individual, information including a name of the individual, contact information of the individual, and qualifications of the individual into the subscriber record; and
storing the subscriber record on the Subscriber Database.

10. (Previously Presented) The method as recited in claim 1, wherein the step of creating a subscriber list comprises:

establishing non-subscriber criteria;
using said non-subscriber criteria to select individuals;
creating non-subscriber records for said selected individuals, each of said non-subscriber records including information about a selected individual; and
maintaining said non-subscriber records on a non-Subscriber Database.

11. (Original) The method as recited in claim 10, further comprising the step of:
adding individuals to the created pool of co-inventors by searching said non-Subscriber Database for non-subscribers that match desired co-inventor qualifications.

12. (Currently Amended) The method as recited in claim 1, further comprising the step of providing wherein each subscriber record includes a confidentiality level associated with the each corresponding subscriber record.

13. (Currently Amended) The method as recited in claim 12, wherein the step of creating a set of desired co-inventor qualifications further comprises the step of:
establishing a confidentiality level for the proposal for invention, ~~wherein said~~ using the confidentiality level ~~is used~~ to eliminate a subscriber from the pool of co-inventors if the confidentiality level of the subscriber does not meet the confidentiality level of the proposal for invention.

14. (Currently Amended) A system for supporting the development of inventions by a plurality of inventors, the system comprising:

a network of a plurality of computing devices;
an Invention Proposal Server for receiving a proposal for invention and for creating a pool of co-inventors from a group of subscribers, said Invention Proposal Server creating a proposal for invention file from the proposal for invention;

[[a]] computing devices for transmitting the proposal for invention to the Invention Proposal Server over the network;

a security system structured and arranged for determining a confidentiality level for the

proposal for invention, for maintaining records regarding confidentiality levels and authorizing access to secured information, the security system including at least one microprocessor; and

a Subscriber Database for storing subscriber records, each of said subscriber records having at least a subscriber name, subscriber contact information, and subscriber qualifications, wherein said proposal for invention includes qualifications desired in a co-inventor and wherein the Invention Proposal Server creates the pool of co-inventors by matching the desired subscriber qualifications with subscriber records having similar subscriber qualifications, wherein said inventor, and said co-inventors in said created pool, develop the invention described in the proposal for invention,

wherein the Invention Proposal Server sends a message to the pool of co-inventors over the network, said message informing each subscriber in the pool of co-inventors of the proposal for invention.

15. (Cancelled)

16. (Currently Amended) The system as recited in claim 14, wherein ~~the Invention Proposal Server creates a proposal for invention file from the invention proposal~~, said proposal for invention file including the proposal for invention, a list of members of the pool of co-inventors, and data generated by the initial inventor and the pool of co-inventors.

17. (Previously Presented) The system as recited in claim 16, wherein the Invention Proposal Server further comprises:

a means by which a group of inventors can access the proposal for invention file over the network; and

a means by which the group of inventors can add data to the proposal for invention file over the network,

wherein the group of inventors comprises the initial inventor and the pool of co-inventors.

18. (Previously Presented) The system as recited in claim 16, further comprising:
an Invention Proposal Web Server for providing at least one web page accessible over the

network, said at least one web page comprising

a means by which a group of inventors can access the proposal for invention file over the network and

a means by which the inventor group can add data to the invention proposal file over the network,

wherein the group of inventors comprises the initial inventor and the pool of co-inventors and said at least one web page is a file.

19. (Previously Presented) The system as recited in claim 14, further comprising:
a computing device for transmitting, by an individual, subscriber information to the Subscriber Database, wherein at least one subscriber record is created from the subscriber information.

20. (Original) The system as recited in claim 14, further comprising:
a non-Subscriber Database for storing non-subscriber records, each of said non-subscriber records corresponding to an individual, each of said individuals being selected using said non-subscriber criteria to select individuals.

21. (Previously Presented) The system as recited in claim 20, wherein the Invention Proposal Server adds individuals to the created pool of co-inventors by searching said non-Subscriber Database for non-subscribers that match desired co-inventor qualifications.

22. (Original) The system as recited in claim 14, wherein each subscriber record includes a confidentiality level associated with the subscriber.

23. (Previously Presented) The system as recited in claim 22, wherein the Invention Proposal Server uses confidentiality levels in subscriber records to eliminate subscribers whose confidentiality level does not meet a confidentiality level of the proposal for invention.

24 - 45. (Cancelled)

46. (Currently Amended) A method of providing support for the development of inventions of a plurality of inventors, said inventors using a plurality of computing devices connected in a network, the method comprising the steps of:

creating ~~by a first computing device~~ a subscriber list, said subscriber list comprising a plurality of subscriber records, each of said subscriber records including a subscriber name, subscriber contact information, and subscriber qualifications;

storing said subscriber list in a database;

receiving by ~~the~~ a first computing device a proposal for invention from an initial inventor, said proposal for invention including desired co-inventor qualifications;

determining by the first computing device a confidentiality level for the proposal for invention;

creating by the first computing device a pool of potential co-inventors by searching for subscriber records in the subscriber list with subscriber qualifications matching the desired co-inventor qualifications, wherein said initial inventor, and said co-inventors in said created pool develop the invention described in the proposal for invention;

contacting by the first computing device members of the pool of potential co-inventors to inform said members of the proposal for invention; and

creating by the first computing device a proposal for invention database record, said proposal for invention database record including information relating to said confidentiality level.

47. (Cancelled)

48. (Previously Presented) The method as recited in claim 46, further comprising the step of:

providing by the first computing device a forum for the pool of co-inventors and the initial inventor to communicate and to further develop the proposal for invention.

49. (Currently Amended) The method as recited in claim 46, further comprising the

step of:

obtaining ~~by a fee collection system~~ a fee from at least one subscriber, using a computing device structured and arranged for collecting a fee, said fee entitling said at least one subscriber to subscribe to the subscriber list.

50. (Currently Amended) The method as recited in claim 46, further comprising the step of:

obtaining ~~by a fee collection system~~ a fee from the initial inventor, using a computing device structured and arranged for collecting a fee, said fee entitling said initial inventor to obtain information concerning the pool of potential co-inventors.

51. (Currently Amended) The method as recited in claim 46, further comprising the step of:

obtaining ~~by a fee collection system~~ a fee from a corporation for creating the subscriber list using a subscriber criteria supplied by the corporation, using a computing device structured and arranged for collecting a fee, for accepting proposals for invention using an proposal for invention criteria supplied by the corporation, and for creating a pool of potential co-inventors using a potential co-inventor criteria supplied by the corporation.

52. (Currently Amended) A method of providing support for the development of inventions ~~for fee~~ of a plurality of inventors for a fee, said inventors using a plurality of computing devices connected in a network, the method comprising the steps of:

providing by a first computing device a secured forum on a network for a pool of potential co-inventors and an initial inventor to communicate and to further develop a proposal for invention, the proposal for invention being initially submitted by the initial inventor, wherein at least one of said co-inventors in said pool develops at least part of the invention described in the proposal for invention, and wherein information on said forum is displayed according to a level of confidentiality.

53. (Previously Presented) The method as recited in Claim 52, further comprising the

step of:

providing by a server at least one web page as means for the secured forum of the initial inventor and the pool of potential co-inventors, wherein the at least one web page is a file.

54. (Currently Amended) The method as recited in claim 52, further comprising the step of:

obtaining ~~by a fee collection system~~ a fee from at least one member of the pool of potential co-inventors, using a computing device structured and arranged for collecting a fee, said fee entitling said at least one member to access the secured forum.

55. (Currently Amended) The method as recited in claim 52, further comprising the step of:

obtaining ~~by a fee collection system~~ a fee from the initial inventor, using a computing device structured and arranged for collecting a fee, said fee entitling said initial inventor to access the secured forum on the network.

56. (Previously Presented) The method as recited in claim 52, wherein the secured forum is on the Internet.

57-81 (Cancelled)

82. (Currently Amended) A computer system for supporting the development of inventions by a plurality of inventors, said inventors using a plurality of computing devices connected in a network, the computer system comprising:

at least one computer-readable memory including:

code for maintaining a database structure of a subscriber list, said subscriber list comprising subscriber records, each of said subscriber records including a subscriber name, subscriber contact information, and subscriber qualifications,

code for receiving a proposal for an invention from an initial inventor, said proposal for invention including desired co-inventor qualifications,

code for searching for subscriber records in the subscriber list with subscriber qualifications matching a set of desired co-inventor qualifications for the invention proposal,

code for creating a pool of co-inventors from a set of subscriber records that match a set of desired co-inventor qualifications, wherein said co-inventors in said created pool develop the invention described in the proposal for invention;

code for determining a confidentiality level for the proposal for invention; and

code that maintains a proposal for invention forum, said proposal for invention forum being accessible to the initial inventor and the pool of co-inventors and said proposal for invention forum allowing the pool of co-inventors to post information to a proposal for invention file, said information being displayed according to a level of confidentiality.

83-87. (Cancelled)